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AD TECH

# Magnite Circumvents DSPs with Launch of ClearLine

Tim Cross 17 April, 2023

Magnite, one of the largest supply-side platforms (SSP) in the industry, this morning announced the launch of ClearLine, a new “direct buying solution” (to use Magnite’s own words) which will give buyers direct access to Magnite’s video inventory. The launch comes at a time where supply-side platforms and demand-side platforms (DSPs) are increasingly encroaching on each other’s territory, as buyers and sellers seek more transparent and efficient pathways for programmatic ad spend.

Magnite describes ClearLine as “a self-service solution that provides agencies direct access to buy premium video inventory on the company’s platform”. Magnite already has experience in deal-driven video sales, and says ClearLine is essentially an agency-facing adaptation of the technology which its publishers use to manage their traditional direct-sold demand through their ad server.

Many SSPs recently have been working to facilitate more direct relationships between their publisher partners and the buy-side. But this productization of this service, providing self-serve access to Magnite’s video inventory, represents an acceleration of this trend.

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Magnite says ClearLine will “significantly” increase spend going towards working media, and will make it easier for sellers and agencies to share data in a privacy-safe manner. WPP’s media arm GroupM, programmatic specialist MiQ, and Camelot Strategic Marketing & Media are listed as launch partners.

### OpenPath, Meet ClearLine

There’s been some debate about the extent to which SSPs’ supply-path optimisation (SPO) efforts really cut out the demand-side, mirroring The Trade Desk’s (similarly named) OpenPath product, which provides its buy-side clients access to sellers’ inventory without going through an SSP. But Magnite clearly suggests that ClearLine will see some spend no longer funnelled through DSPs.

“While DSPs will remain the primary method for agencies to access premium video inventory on our platforms, we’ve heard agencies’ requests for a more direct connection in certain scenarios,” said Sean Buckley, chief revenue officer at Magnite. “ClearLine delivers agencies that additional path into our ecosystem while also benefiting media owners. In the end, both agencies and sellers want options that put more media dollars to work and offer greater flexibility around data enablement and sharing.”

Andrew Meaden, global head of investment at GroupM, similarly acknowledged that ClearLine will cut DSPs out of some of its buys. “GroupM has long been a driver of supply path optimisation, to maximise the working media and reduce supply chain costs,” he said. “We partnered closely with Magnite to launch our GroupM Premium Marketplace (GPM) and now, with ClearLine we can activate GPM’s capabilities faster and further, allowing our clients to spend more on media and messaging and less on fees and technology costs. This is the next step to accessing guaranteed quality video supply at scale without the need for a DSP across certain kinds of inventory transactions or unnecessary hops between the buyer and publisher.”

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